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NEITHER GENIUS NOR MARTYR.

THERE are women, like men, of whom "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them." Among these last must be reckoned Jane Welsh Carlyle, a woman who, without strength of her own to rise above the common level, has been lifted into prominence through the greatness of her husband. It has been claimed for her, by Froude, that she was both genius and martyr; that splendid talents were repressed by constant exactions of her husband; that she was "a human sacrifice" slain upon the altar of his ambition. He has compared her to an "Iphigenia in Aulis." Gail Hamilton and other writers have followed his conception and comparisons.

Taken away from the nimbus of Carlyle's fame and the over-praise of critics, the history of Jane Welsh Carlyle's life does not show her to have been a great or even a remarkable woman, if steadfastness of purpose or heroic endurance of ills common to humanity typifies that which is worthy of admiration. Of herself, she accomplished nothing beyond writing two volumes of mediocre letters. Yet, few women of genius ever had better preparation than she for a career of intellectual labor. She was the only child of well educated parents, possessed of wealth, and having liberal ideas respecting the education of women. Through them she received an amount of instruction not common for girls at that period to obtain, as Latin and some knowledge of the sciences supplemented for her the ordinary branches of a girls' school. In addition to this, from early childhood until her twentieth year, she had the assistance and encouragement of the brilliant Edward Irving. The beloved friend as well as pupil of this renowned orator, it had been Irving's pleasure to expand her powers to the utmost, to cultivate her taste to a level with his own. With him she studied "Virgil"; he was her adviser in

literary matters, and her attempts at composition in poetry and prose were submitted to him for approval and correction. Upon Irving's departure from Haddington, Carlyle was requested to supply his place as Miss Welsh's literary adviser. This position Carlyle filled with great assiduity for the five years which preceded their marriage. He studied German with her; introduced her to the works of Goethe and Schiller; supervised, as Irving had done, her verses and tales, and with the same result. The children of her brain died with their birth.

Enough women have written, and will continue to write, for this individual failure to be unworthy of mention, were it not that Mrs. Carlyle's claim to genius has been asserted by numerous English and American critics. One of these asserts that Mrs. Carlyle was not her husband's "inferior in intelligence." Another, reviewing the letters edited by Froude after Carlyle's death, compares her abilities to George Eliot's. "So unmistakable," says this writer, "are the signs of uncommon literary talent in these letters, that one cannot help thinking with a twinge of regret and indignation that with a little loving appreciation and generous encouragement from him whose commendation she would have accounted priceless, the world might have gained in Mrs. Carlyle a great novelist. . . . Had he done for her a tithe of what George Henry Lewes did for Mary Ann Evans, . . . English literature might have had a double reason to be grateful to the name of Carlyle."

As if every reader was not aware that Marion Evans had achieved a position in literature for herself long before she made the acquaintance of Lewes. Assistant editor of the "Westminster Review," an able writer of essays and translator of abstruse German philosophical works before she met Lewes, she required no fostering care from him to make her genius blossom. Between herself and Lewes, the connection was in one phase a literary partnership, contracted when both were in the prime of life, and where the woman furnished an equal amount of capital with the man in the form of brain vitality. Between the two women not a shadow of intellectual similarity existed. George Eliot shunned the world to have leisure for thinking and working. Never less alone than when alone, her days and nights were devoted to study. She had mastered many sciences. "Probably," says Justin McCarthy, "no other novel writer since novel writing became a business, possessed one tithe of her

scientific knowledge." Mrs. Carlyle, on the contrary, was a superficial woman, lost without society. Her learning was little beyond that of the average school-girl of to-day. According to her husband, she did not know enough of grammar to correct proof-sheets of her friend Caroline Jewsbury's novels,—an assertion that she did not contradict, and which is borne out by passages in her letters which remained untouched by their editors.

Partly exiled from society during the first seven years of her married life, Mrs. Carlyle was in a constant state of *ennui*. Unlike a woman of genius, she found no solace in books which could ripen into fruition talents she might have possessed. Her reading was that which exacted no attention. The literature which her husband enjoyed was to her positively distasteful. Old folios, and almost illegible manuscripts which he ransacked for materials to write a "French Revolution" or a "Cromwell," were in her eyes "rubbish which she wished at the bottom of something where she might hear less about it." "She read the first two volumes of 'Friedrich,'" says Carlyle, "most of it in the printer's sheets. . . . The other volumes (hardly even the third, I think,) she never read." The circulating libraries supplied her with novels, which she read lying on a sofa, after the manner of fashionable women, who utilize the thoughts of others for the purpose of stifling their own. It is against Carlyle and in favor of a woman of this caliber that Froude complains. "Carlyle consulted her judgment about his writings, for he knew the value of it; but in his conceptions and elaborations he chose to be always by himself. He said truly he was a Bedouin." This is amusing, since all men and women, when writing, desire to be alone. Did Froude wish the wife to conceive "Sartor Resartus" and Carlyle to elaborate it, or should she have elaborated her husband's conceptions? Either way, it would have been a strange medley.

That great men admired Mrs. Carlyle does not prove her possessed of sufficient ability to assist in the elaboration and conception of her husband's works. Intellectual men take as much delight as others in listening to airy nothings spoken by pretty women who come within the radius of their social circle, and shine there either by their own or, as in Mrs. Carlyle's case, by reflected light. Some kind of brilliancy, however, they must have. It is without the bounds of possibility that Jane Carlyle,

as plain Jane Welsh, would have provoked Tennyson, as is said, into throwing himself into a cab for the express purpose of going to the other end of London to visit her; that Leigh Hunt would have embalmed her name in verse; that Darwin would have attended her; or that the great Jeffrey, like the old flirt he was proud of being considered, would have courted her with sufficient *impressement* "to cause considerable jealousy of the reigning queen among the non-reigning."

This flirtation between Jeffrey and Mrs. Carlyle has occasioned some severe criticism; and, peculiar circumstance, it is not the wife but the husband who is made to appear the wrong-doer. "It is not to Carlyle's credit," writes Gail Hamilton, "that he never shows the slightest uneasiness at Jeffrey's attitude toward his wife. . . . If Carlyle had been a man instead of a stone, he would have died of despair at seeing how differently from a stone a man bears himself toward a woman. Being a stone, he never saw that Jeffrey was a man." In such a flirtation a commonplace husband, even if not suspecting wrong, would at least have been jealous of attentions paid to a young and pretty wife by a prosperous man like Jeffrey. It is high praise to Carlyle that he was neither suspicious nor jealous at a time when he was writing for bread in a maze of doubt as to how he was to find a public. Sick, sad, and solitary himself, by the nature of his occupation obliged to be alone, he yet enjoyed Jeffrey's openly avowed admiration of his wife; could listen to her "humorous bits of narration about it"; and could write, "Suspicion of her nobleness would have been mad in me; and could I grudge her that little bit of entertainment she might be able to extract from this poor, harmless sport in a life so grim as she cheerfully had with me?" If this is feeling like a stone, it would be well for most women if the generality of mankind would get themselves transformed at once.

One outcome of this intimacy was an offer on Jeffrey's part to assist Carlyle, by settling a yearly income on him of one hundred pounds. This generosity was not intended so much to aid a struggling genius as to place in more comfort the life of the woman he loved. Carlyle has been blamed for refusing to accept this pecuniary help. "Jeffrey," it has been said, "never appeared better, or Carlyle worse, than in this transaction." Yet, surely Carlyle was right in refusing to sacrifice his independence, although by doing so the necessity to leave Edinburgh would

have been prevented, the residence at Craigenputtock rendered unnecessary. This Craigenputtock episode in the life of these two people has excited as much compassion for Mrs. Carlyle as if she had been another Margaret Roberval, condemned to live alone upon a desert island; although this place, to which they were driven by want of means to exist in Edinburgh, was in a foreign land but fifteen miles from Templand, where Mrs. Carlyle's mother lived, and twelve miles from the town of Dumfries.

It was in search of food and raiment that Carlyle took his wife from their pretty little home at Comely Bank to live with him at Craigenputtock. Eighteen months of housekeeping had caused the few hundred pounds with which they had started to dwindle down to a sum too small to count on for future exigencies. The visible financial resources ebbing away, "no periodical editors desiring him," bad health bringing all manner of dispiritment, and "despicablest fears of coming to absolute beggary besieging" him, Carlyle had turned to this moorland farm, where, amid the silence of nature, and undisturbed by petty wants, he could go on with his task and write that which would compel recognition of his genius. Neither was this "Craig o' Putta" such a terrible place as it has been described. The large manor house, in which the Carlyles lived, had been put in order for them throughout, in masonry and carpentering, by Mrs. Welsh, delighted at the thought of having her daughter so near. The house itself was a substantial, comfortable, and even half elegant building. The drawing-room, finely papered, furnished with the family furniture from the residence at Had-dington, a piano, and Goethe's picture on the wall, was quite smart. Behind the drawing-room was the library, filled with books, a snug little room, with green curtains, and in winter a bright fire, where Carlyle sat and wrote with his wife beside him, "and could laugh at the howling tempests without." Adjoining the main building was the farm cottage, in which lived Jane and Alexander Carlyle, sister and brother of the great writer. Upon them fell the task of managing the farm, which had the usual number of serving people. Three men and two women were employed, independently of Mrs. Carlyle's own maid.

Surrounded by these active, helpful people, it could not have been necessary for Mrs. Carlyle, as has been charged, "to break

down health and strength with household work; to wear her life out milking cows and scouring floors." Much hard work there could not have been in a household of two tidy persons, who entertained but little company, and where one servant at least was always at hand, to do the drudgery of cooking, scouring floors, and washing pots and pans. To superintend this work was Mrs. Carlyle's greatest hardship,—a trial that, in her case, seems to have been aggravated by her husband's unique taste in desiring clean dishes and well-cooked food. "He did not care for delicacies," says his biographer, in pitying Mrs. Carlyle, "but cleanliness and perfect cooking of common things he always insisted on." He did not like it, "if the porridge was smoked or the bread heavy . . . or a dish ill washed."

It was for attending to these little things that Mrs. Carlyle has been praised. The baker's bread brought from Dumfries was sour, and the wife felt it her duty to see that this article of food was prepared properly at home. No great difficulty this, one would imagine, even for a woman brought up, as she cried, "to do nothing but cultivate her mind." Over the doing, however, she made more fuss than did Florence Nightingale in supervising the wants of an army of soldiers. Things of this kind, that other women do and forget, Mrs. Carlyle has perpetuated by means of conversation and letters. What she gave up for her husband, as well as what she did for him, was recounted to her friends. Among others, she related her trials to Caroline Jewsbury, a third-rate novelist, who has made from her statements a moving romance of the "Minerva Press" order. All who have tears to shed are called upon by her to weep over Mrs. Carlyle, not only overworked, but "shut up in a desert with a man who seldom spoke to her, who gave her no human tenderness, no caresses, no loving words, nothing out of which one's heart can make the wine of life. A glacier on a mountain top," she says of Carlyle, "would have been as human companionship."

Instead of this being the case, Mrs. Carlyle, writing from Craigenputtock, in one of her good moods, tells us, "My husband is as good company as reasonable mortal could desire." Other letters prove that, instead of having less, she had more of her husband's presence than most women. Their life at the "Craig o' Putta," as described by themselves, shows him both warm-hearted and thoughtful. It was their custom on every fine

morning to have an hour or more of galloping together on horseback through the beautiful valley of the Frith. Returning home and breakfasting, Carlyle took to his writing, while his wife, studious only of household good, inspected her garden, gathered flowers for her drawing-room, or engaged in any work that seemed fittest. At the dinner hour, Mrs. Carlyle had her husband's society again.

In addition to this meeting at meal-times, there was an evening half hour which Carlyle, however busy, made a practice of devoting to his wife. This half hour, which he calls "the one bright portion of my black day," was passed in the drawing-room, she lying on the sofa, he sitting on the floor at her feet, on a rug, with his back to the jamb, and the door never so little open so that the smoke from his pipe might be drawn up the chimney, and so not annoy her. During this half hour Carlyle was the talker, his wife the listener. This has been called egoism in him, her friends clamoring that he did not give his wife, who was also a brilliant talker, a chance to speak. This charge is made idly enough; no one, not even his wife, cared to interrupt this best Saxon thinker and speaker of his time. The brightest minds of England were glad to sit

"Mute when the Corypheus spake."

His wife, like the rest, was charmed into silence. She wrote to his mother: "It is my husband's worst fault with me that I will not or cannot speak. Often, when he has talked for an hour without answer, he will beg for some sign of life on my part, and the only sign I can give is a little kiss." This was the best answer she could have made, and shows her husband intensely human. Women do not lavish caresses on glaciers or stone men. Neither do they write in such terms of endearment as she uses to her husband. It is still in the Craig o' Putta period, when she writes to him from her mother's home at Templand: "You said you would weary, and I do hope in my heart you are wearying. It will be so sweet to make it all up to you, when I return. You will take me and hear all my bits of experience, and your heart will beat when you find how I have longed to return to you. Darling, dearest, loveliest." His answers are in the same strain. A letter from her is what "the drop of water from Lazarus's finger might have been to Dives in the flames,"

or "like a cup of water in the hot desert." He is "very rich with her," he writes, "were I without a penny in the world: but the Herzen's Goody must not fret herself and torment her poor sick head. I will be back to her; not an hour will I lose. Heaven knows the sun shines not on the spot that could be pleasant to me where she was not."

With his wife on her way to join him in London, he is filled with apprehension that an accident of some kind will befall her, and writes: "All yesterday my thoughts were with thee in thy lone voyage, which now I pray the great Giver of all good may have terminated prosperously. . . . I felt that my best possession was trusted to the false sea, and all my care for it could avail nothing. Do not wait a moment in writing; I shall have no peace till I know that you are safe. . . . Of rest I can well understand you have need enough. I grieve to think how you have been harassed of late. . . . Alas! I have no soft Aladdin's palace here to bid you hasten and take refuge in; . . . no better shelter than my own bosom. . . . Thank God, this still is yours, and I can receive you there without distrust, and wrap you close with the solacements of a true heart's love." It gives him joy to think that in this specter-crowded desert "I have a living person whose heart I can clasp to mine, and so feel that I too am alive." She writes him of some skin disease, and he answers: "The disease on that fair face—how is it? If no better, never mind; I swear that it shall and will get better; or, if it does not, that I will love you more than ever while it lasts. Will that make amends? It is no vain parade of rhetoric—it is a serious fact; my love for you does not depend on looks, and defies old age and decay, and I can prophesy will grow stronger the longer we live and toil together." Words that were fulfilled, for his love was as strong and beautiful at seventy as in his youth.

It is true that in the forty years of their pilgrimage together the domestic machinery had many hitches. These have all been attributed to the man, no one caring to record that his wife as well as he could stir up a home tornado. She, by her own account, was "a sky-rocket that could go off on the strength of its own explosiveness." To be "in a devil of a temper" was as common an occurrence with her as with him. And if Carlyle was not easy to live with, as has been asserted, she was still less comfortable, for she did not have his talent of forgetting things

that caused anger. According to Froude, "when provoked she was as hard as flint, with possibility of dangerous fire." As a child she was called by her teacher "a little deevil," for fighting a boy and making his nose bleed. She quarreled with her own family, her mother not excepted. A story is told of her scolding her mother in a manner to make her weep bitterly, for purchasing some extra candles and cakes to furnish a party for her. The lovely relations in which Carlyle lived with all his family were not hers. This she recognized when comforting him for his mother's death. "Your grief for your mother," she writes, "must be altogether sweet and soft. You must feel that you have always been a good son to her; that you have always appreciated her as she deserved, and that she knew this and loved you to the last moment. How thankful you may be that you went when you did. . . . Oh! what would I have given for last words to keep . . . but the words that awaited me were: 'Your mother is dead!' And I deserved that it should so end; I was not the dutiful child to my mother that you were to yours."

A loving, self-sacrificing son and brother, it was impossible that Carlyle could have been the monster of ferocious selfishness that his wife with her caustic pen has pictured him, not only in letters to her friends, but in the note-book kept for her own private use. In her diary, written in 1855, the records are of one resentful, who has brooded over small things until they have assumed large proportions.

This diary of Mrs. Carlyle's tallies with her character. Coming into contact with the greatest men and women of her day, she found no higher use for this journal than to record in it her jealousies and domestic services. The very commencement of this note-book is an outrage against womanly dignity. Its entire contents almost justify Charles Buller's defense of the Duchess de Praslin's murderer: "What could a poor fellow do with a wife who kept a journal, but murder her." An absurd jealousy of Lady Ashburton, her husband's friend, is one plea for writing this book; and yet she confesses, "What good is to result from writing it in a paper book is more than I can tell."

Some of the entries are, to say the least, exceedingly puerile. A *miserere* is made out of so small a thing as this: "The evening devoted to mending Mr. C.'s trowsers, among other things:

‘Being an only child,’ I never wished to sew men’s trowsers, no never!” . . . “Mended Mr. C.’s dressing-gown.”

“When I think of what I is, and what I used to was,
I gin to think I’ve sold myself for very little eas.”

This entry is on a par with a long letter addressed to a physician, which is filled by her with a description of how she took two days to mend a pair of her husband’s old boots. This service a cobbler would have done much better, and in half the time, for the compensation of a few shillings,—money that she was well able to pay, as Carlyle was then (1863) in the zenith of his fame, and in excellent circumstances. Over the funds she had unlimited control. Carlyle, always liberal with his means, was at that very time urging her to purchase a carriage for her own use,—a luxury which, in the autumn of that same year, he presented her with himself. For allowing his wife to put a flannel lining in his boots, Carlyle has been called “a brute” and “a cad.” The probability is that, immersed in “Friedrich” as he was, until the thing was done he did not know how it was being accomplished. Through doing just such unnecessary things, and crying about them afterward, Mrs. Carlyle has gained the reputation of having been a martyr to the whims of an exacting husband, when she was only a thrifty Scotch woman, trying “to make a crown a pound” by saving on the household economies,—a habit which had grown upon her, perhaps, in the poverty of those early years when Carlyle haunted the libraries and roamed the streets of London with worn boots “and hat well nigh rimless.”

Still, even when begirt with this, which Emerson called “the most honorable poverty he ever knew,” Mrs. Carlyle was no martyr. A linnet carried on the eagle’s back to the sun, she was always bathed in a glory. Means for household necessities there always was; and in her darkest days a Mazzini came to visit and confide in her; a Cavaignac listened to her stories and claimed her for a French woman, which in many of her characteristics she certainly was. Her beauty, even, was of the south, not of the north. Black-haired, with large, lustrous black eyes; clear, olive complexion; irregular features; mobile mouth, varying with every expression of her warm, passionate nature; tall, lithe, and graceful in person; quick and impetuous in temperament; loving to kiss and be kissed; changeful of mood; turning easily

as a child, even in old age, from laughter to tears, from smiles to frowns; swayed by impulse more than reason,—Mrs. Carlyle was a strong type of the neurotic woman, whose every weakness is an added charm.

Women of this nature, fascinating in society, are not always the most desirable companions at home. For Carlyle, there is little doubt that his life would have been more pleasant, and his posthumous fame greater, had poverty not been a barrier to his marrying his first love, the fair and amiable Margaret Gordon, the original of the Blumine he has pictured under the head of "Romance" in "*Sartor Resartus*." About this "Rose goddess" there was a greater dignity, a more self-sustained poise of character. Not so bright and sparkling as Mrs. Carlyle, she was less fanciful; her emotions lay deeper. In this she would have suited better to have toiled through life with the man who had cried with Goethe, "There is in man a Higher than Love of Happiness; he can do without Happiness, and instead thereof find Blessedness."

It was in pursuit of this God-inspired doctrine that Carlyle overlooked the little things that make the joys of little minds,—among them, the craving of his wife's emotional nature to have him ring the measures of his love by "every hour i' the clock." The egoism of her own love was so intense that, a middle-aged woman, she desires him still to be her "sighing Strephon," and in some moment of penitence writes to him: "Oh, why cannot I believe it, once for all, that with all my faults and follies I am dearer to you than any earthly creature?"

"Unfaith in aught," sings Tennyson of Love, "is want of faith in all." This unfaith was at the bottom of most of Mrs. Carlyle's wretchedness. In her girlhood, she tells Carlyle: "When I read in your looks and words that you love me, then I care not one straw for the whole universe besides. But when you fly from me to smoke tobacco, or speak of me as a mere circumstance of your lot, then indeed my heart is troubled about many things." This love was a feeling that absorbed her whole existence, and she could not pardon the books or friends which drew his thoughts or time from her.

And, alas! the nature of her employments gave her time to think of what she gave him and received in return. Emerson's noble "If I love you, what is that to you," met no response in her soul. She demanded her pound of flesh, or spirit rather, as

was bargained for, forgetting that the best love is that which delights in giving, which asks for no return. Wrapped in an egoism of sentiment, a hasty word, a preoccupied look, a letter not on time, were sources of grief to Jane Carlyle. Paroxysms of dread assail her at times, for fear that her hot temper and exactions have driven her husband's affections from her. On her forty-third birthday a letter fails to come until two hours after it is due. In these two hours Mrs. Carlyle contrives to get through so many emotions that she is "as much broken to pieces as if she had come through an attack of cholera and typhus fever." She shuts herself "up in her own room to fancy everything that was most tormenting." "Were you," she writes to Carlyle, "finally so out of patience with me that you had resolved to write to me no more at all? Were you taken so ill that you could not write? That last idea made me mad to get off to the railway and back to London. Oh! mercy, what a two hours I had of it!" The letter when it arrived set her mind at rest for the time, as it was most affectionate. A present accompanied it, of which she says: "Yes, I have kissed the dear little card-case, and now I will lie down awhile and try to get some sleep."

In the June of 1844, a time when, according to Froude, the two had parted for the purpose of a final separation on account of Carlyle's coldness, she writes to him in a fresh outburst of enthusiasm: "Oh, my darling, I want to give you an emphatic kiss, rather than write! but you are at Chelsea and I at Seaforth, so the thing is clearly impossible for the moment. But I will keep it for you till I come, for it is not with words that I can thank you adequately for that kindest of birthday letters and its small enclosure,—touching little key! I cried over it, and laughed over it, and could not sufficiently admire the graceful idea—an idea which might come under the category of what Cavaignac used to call '*Idées de femme*,' supposed to be unattainable by the coarser sex."

No better proof of the mutual love of this couple exists than the habit they had of writing daily to each other during absence. Only illness of a severe character ever prevented either from sending this token of remembrance. Mrs. Carlyle chronicles the receipt of two beautiful letters from her husband in one day. At the age of sixty-four, she tells him: "You are so good about writing that you deserve to be goodly done by." A

breakfast to her without a letter from him "was of the stupidest." "The absence of the loaf or coffee-pot would have been less sensibly felt." "When you are so unfailing in writing to me,—and such good, kind letters,—it were a shame if I willfully disappointed you." If these letters failed through any cause, Mrs. Carlyle would get into one of her rages and write very bitter words. When she did this to her husband it was not much amiss; conjugal scoldings, it is said, frequently follow such passionate endearments as she indulged in. The unpardonable sin was her want of loyalty in writing complaints of him in moments of anger to her and his friends. This showed her lacking in that fine instinct which in all ages has taught the learned or unlearned, the great and the humble, to hide the failings of one beloved. Fidelity of this sort, woman's most beautiful characteristic, Mrs. Carlyle possessed in the most limited degree.

She also lacked refinement in many other ways that tend to make woman respected as well as admired. She smoked tobacco; swore and used unseemly words upon slightest or no provocation; had no faith in things seen or unseen. This latter fault, Gail Hamilton taxes to her association with Carlyle; but Edward Irving reproached her with it in youth. She was sarcastic to a disagreeable point. Irving, with unloverlike frankness, describes her at twenty as one "who contemplates the inferiority of others rather from the point of ridicule and contempt than from that of commiseration and relief; and by so doing she not only leaves objects in distress, and loses the luxury of doing good, but she contracts in her own mind a degree of coldness and bitterness which suits ill with my conception of female character. . . . I fear she will escape altogether out of the region of my sympathies and the sympathies of honest home-bred men."

Of the man who wrote thus about Jane Carlyle, just previous to his marriage with another, many pretty bits of sentiment have floated through the press, such as this: "It is sixty years ago, and the heartache of it is as heavy and hopeless to-day as on the sad morning when he turned away from what seemed to him Paradise, because his love was in it, to die of a broken heart." Sweetly pretty, but not biographically correct. Irving died at forty-three with a complication of disorders affecting his brain, and unconnected with his heart. To complete

this romance, Mrs. Carlyle is made also the heroine of a loveless marriage. She is said to have married for "ambition," "while her maiden heart was sore and sad for her lost love, and empty of hope." To have loved one man while vowing to love another, such a hideous wrong Mrs. Carlyle did not perpetrate. The charge, like many others, has been made for the purpose of weaving the materials composing her life into a moving story.

Her biographers have been animated with this desire to cast a halo of romance around one who seems to the average female mind to have been worse than commonplace. Loving Irving, as she said, "passionately," the earth has scarcely time to revolve once around its orbit before she is just as passionately in love with another. After marriage, instead of taking some human child into her sympathies when her means allowed it, she cherishes a poodle dog! carries this with her wherever she goes; kisses it and calls it her "Blessed dog"; has it to sleep in the bed with her during her husband's absences! Complaints that a modest woman only mentions in private to her family physician, are with her topics of common conversation with her friends. In this she does not appear to have had the slightest reticence, where reticence would have been both dignified and proper. Concerning her illnesses and domestic trials, she used expressions of most extravagant hyperbole. Did she bake a loaf of bread, she compares herself, weeping, to Benvenuto Cellini forming a Perseus. When she is expecting a new servant to train in household ways, she writes to a friend that, because of her husband's irritability, she must stand between him and her servants, "imitating thus the Roman soldier who gathered his arms full of the enemy's spears, and received them all into his own breast." Of a girl who was leaving her, she says: "Mr. C. always speaks of her as 'that horse, that cow, that mooncalf!' But upon my honor it is an injustice to the horse, the cow, and even the mooncalf." This quality of exaggeration, whether natural or acquired, extended to all things. When a young girl, she dated a letter to Carlyle—in a fit of momentary impatience with friends and surroundings of her own choosing—as from "Hell"; a proceeding which is of a piece with Carlyle's signature of "Devil's Den" appended to the Burns essay written at Craigenputtock.

Other examples of this kind are to be found all through Mrs. Carlyle's letters. Her metaphors are very extravagant when

speaking of noises that disturbed her sleeping. Was it a barking dog that annoyed her, "the whole universe was turned into one great dog-kennel." The braying of an ass and crowing of a cock at midnight was "one devilry after another,—several asses braying as if the devil was in them,—never so many cocks challenging each other all over the parish." All noises disturbed Mrs. Carlyle quite as much as they did her husband, and when she was energetic in trying to stop them, it was as much for her own comfort as his. This could not be suspected, from reading the grand terms she uses in recording her services. Carlyle "clasping her in his arms and calling her his guardian angel" was not sufficient recompense; she invoked the gratitude of "posterity" and praise of "unborn generations."

After his wife's death, Carlyle annotates the Roman soldier letter: "Oh heavens, the comparison! it is too true." Others bring the exclamations: "My poor martyred darling! Terrible to me was the reading of this." "Alas! *Ay de mi*," and "Oh, what of pain, pain, my poor Jeanie had to bear in this thorny pilgrimage of life." These self-accusations have been taken as evidence of Carlyle's guilt, when they were only tokens of the greatness of his love, the poignancy of his grief. Alas! like many others,—and those the most loving,—when death came it brought vain regrets that he had not been kinder when it was in his power. His remorse, which he gave vent to in words sad as the lamentations of Job, bear this thought constantly as their burden. "Blind and deaf that we are, oh think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust cloud, and idle dissonance of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful when too late."

In this remorse all the failings of his dead wife were forgotten. How holy are the dead! The dust had reclaimed its own, and memory painted her as some beautiful, radiant being whose soul came direct from the Empyrean. "A winged Psyche who soared above sickness and refused to be degraded by it." Not all the celebrated women of his time "could, if all boiled down and distilled to essence, make one such woman." She was his noble heroine and martyr. Her loyalty to him he never suspected. Even after reading letter after letter of complaints about his bad temper, old boots, and general atrabiliary condition, he can say: "She at no instant, never once, I do believe, made the least complaint of me or my behavior (often bad, or at

least thoughtless and weak).” Her diary of 1855—so beautiful is the blindness of love—he does not comprehend; publishes it thinking “the king can do no wrong.” He accepted without any analysis her own estimate of her troubles; felt with her that they were greater than ordinary; and although no great grief, except the loss of parents, came into her life, prolonged to sixty-five years, he inscribes on her tombstone that, “In her bright existence she had more sorrows than common.”

Along with this fanciful estimate of his wife’s character, there came a remorse as exaggerated for his own shortcomings. Little things in which he failed rose up before him as accusing angels. A refusal to alight once, at his wife’s request, at her milliner’s, wrings from him the cry, “Oh cruel, cruel! I have remembered Johnson and Utoxetter on thought of that Elsie cruelty more than once; and if any clear energy ever returned to me, might some day imitate it!” In one way, Carlyle did imitate Johnson’s stern expiation of his one remembered act of youthful disobedience. “For many years after she had left him,” writes Froude, “when we passed the spot in our walks where she was last seen alive, he would bare his gray head in the wind and rain—his features wrung with unavailing sorrow.”

Froude, who listened to all Carlyle’s outpourings of love and grief for the wife snatched from him in a moment,—as if by the gods, while taking a pleasure drive in her carriage,—took his friend’s babblement all too seriously. Carlyle was then past seventy, Froude some years his junior. It is easy to imagine these two old men talking of the one who was gone, and how, from these conversations, Froude got the idea that Mrs. Carlyle had been a superhumanly lovely being, who was slain upon the altar of her husband’s ambition, “a human sacrifice,” another “Iphigenia in Aulis.” The descriptions of Froude have been accepted and improved upon, until it is written, in all gravity, that “Carlyle was created with a mere rudimentary heart; his development required the offering of a rare and radiant maiden who should lavish on him her heart and life.”

Not so will future generations understand the relations of this couple. When Carlyle’s “Day of Judgment” has passed, an “Hour of Recognition” will come, when he will be seen as one of the most splendid figures of this nineteenth century. Perfect in his relations as husband, son, and brother; veiling a deep love of humanity under a mantle of irony; “Truest friend and

noblest foe," Emerson's verdict will be accepted as the true one. "Strong he is, upright, noble, and sweet, and makes good how much of our human nature." In this time his wife will be relegated to her proper position; the world will know her neither as genius nor martyr, but simply as the wife of the great man whose name she bore. Her highest praise will be that in an age of *gig-women*, as well as *gig-men*, she chose to encounter poverty with love and Carlyle rather than a life of ease and luxury without him.

ALICE HYNEMAN RHINE.